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ABSTRACT

This resource guide profiles 12 exemplary programs serving people with disabilities through interagency collaboration for transition, supported employment, and parent-professional collaboration. The guide opens with a description of the North Central Regional Information Exchange, a federally funded project that is identifying and promoting adoption of exemplary practices within the Region V states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. The guide outlines the process by which programs are evaluated and awarded exemplary status. The individual profiles of the 12 programs are then provided, containing information about each program's mission, services, target population, larger organization, and staff. Key program components are highlighted and stories of how the programs have worked for specific individuals are shared. (JDD)

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ED 360 789

North Central REGIONAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Exemplary Programs for Persons with Disabilities

In Transition, Supported Employment, and Parent-Professional Collaboration

Exemplary Status Recipients for 1992

Institute on Community Integration (UAP)
College of Education
University of Minnesota

EC 302361

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This report was prepared at the Institute on Community Integration (UAP), College of Education, University of Minnesota by:

David R. Johnson, Project Director
Teri Wallace, Center Coordinator
Nancy Krawetz, Project Assistant

Additional copies may be ordered by contacting:

Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 624-4512.

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About This Publication

This resource guide profiles 12 exemplary programs serving people with disabilities through interagency collaboration for transition, supported employment, and parent-professional collaboration. The programs were evaluated and selected as exemplary by the North Central Regional Information Exchange (NCRIE), a federally-funded project that is identifying and promoting adoption of exemplary practices within the Region V states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

The guide opens with a description of the NCRIE and the process by which programs are evaluated and awarded exemplary status (pages 1-4). Following that are the individual profiles of the 11 programs. Information about each program's mission, services, target population, larger organization, and staff is provided. Key program components that are exemplary in nature are highlighted and stories of how the programs have worked for specific individuals are shared.

The purpose of this document is to inform service providers of exemplary programs and to offer an invitation to pursue further information about programs that are of interest to readers. The reader should feel free to contact either the person listed on the program profile or staff at the North Central Regional Information Exchange for further information or assistance.

Table of Contents

Overview

- North Central Regional Information Exchange ____ 1-4

Interagency Collaboration for Transition

- Cooperative Education Service Agency - CESA #1
  Instructional Programs for Employment ____ 5-7
- Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio
  Teen Services ____ 8-10
- Great Oaks Joint Vocational School District
  Hamilton County Transition to Work Project ____ 11-13
- Penta County Vocational School
  Job Options in Business and Industry ____ 14-16
- Transition Resource Agency Council (TRAC) ____ 17-19
- Wood County Board of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability
  Wood Lane Adult Services - Transition Program ____ 20-22

Supported Employment

- Dakota, Inc.
  Supported Employment Services ____ 23-25
- Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio
  Employment Services ____ 26-28
- Wood County Board of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability
  Community Employment Services of Wood Lane ____ 29-32

Parent-Professional Collaboration

- Cooperative Education Service Agency - CESA #1
  Instructional Programs for Employment ____ 33-35
- Family Resource Center on Disabilities
  BUILDING Project ____ 36-38
- United Cerebral Palsy Association of Metropolitan Detroit, Inc.
  "Parents are Experts" Parents Training Parents ____ 39-41

North Central Regional Information Exchange
Institute on Community Integration (UAP)
University of Minnesota
6 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 626-7220; Fax # (612) 624-9344

Overview and Purpose of the NCRIE

The North Central Regional Information Exchange (NCRIE) is housed at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, within the College of Education. The NCRIE, established in 1991, is part of the national network of Regional Information Exchange projects funded through the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The primary goal of the NCRIE is to improve the services to individuals with disabilities by: (1) identifying and validating exemplary programs in Region V in three NIDRR priority areas, (2) making information available to schools and community service agencies, and (3) providing technical assistance in the adoption or adaptation of exemplary programs. Exemplary programs are identified through a selection process which includes five steps: (1) nomination, (2) application completion, (3) application review, (4) site visit, and (5) final advisory committee review and selection determination.

The NCRIE promotes the existence of exemplary programs by hosting a regional conference highlighting exemplary programs, disseminating a regional newsletter entitled *Regional Perspectives*, preparing and disseminating publications and presentations describing examplary programs, and brokering and providing technical assistance to organizations interested in adopting or adapting an exemplary program. Information is shared with agencies and organizations that serve individuals with disabilities, families, and governmental units in Region V, which includes the six states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

NIDRR Priority Areas

The NCRIE identifies exemplary programs serving individuals with disabilities that fit within the following three NIDRR priority areas:

- Interagency collaboration and coordination in programs for transition from school to work, including model programs that are exemplary in their use of state-school exiting data for program planning.
- Emergent issues in supported employment programs, such as the involvement of co-workers, obtaining long-term funding support for individuals, and appropriate family involvement.
- Parent-professional collaboration in the integration of individuals with disabilities in education, community living, and employment.

Along with fitting in one of the above priority areas, the program must also meet the prerequisites listed in the next section before going through the selection process.

Essential Program Components for Selection Process

The following are essential program components for programs to meet before completing the selection process:

- Have a clearly defined mission with goals, and activities.
- Fit into one of the priority areas defined above.
- Be able to demonstrate program effectiveness through documentation of program services and outcomes.
- Be able to identify costs for a recent twelve-month period.
- Be willing to share program information with interested professionals through telephone, letter, or site visits.
- Keep a log of contacts and report periodically to NCRIE.
- Be willing to act as technical assistance consultant to assist other organizations wishing to adopt or adapt the exemplary program.

If the nominated program stakeholders agree with the above components, then the application can be completed and returned to the NCRIE for continuation through the selection process which is based on a set of identification criteria established by the NCRIE staff and advisory board.

Identification Criteria

The NCRIE has established a set of minimum criteria on which nominated programs are evaluated. Criteria are applied to the application responses and site visit situations. The criteria are divided into two categories, general criteria and specific criteria. General criteria apply to all programs and address broad agency-level programmatic and organizational characteristics and features. Specific criteria refer more directly to each of the NIDRR priority areas: 1) Interagency collaboration and coordination in programs for transition from school to work, 2) Emergent issues in supported employment programs, and 3) Parent-professional collaboration in the integration of individuals with disabilities in education, community living, and employment. The topical areas for the general criteria are:

- Program Philosophy
- Consumer Empowerment
- Goal Driven and Outcome Based
- Population Served
- Organizational Structure
- Cost Effectiveness and Efficiency
- Program Efficacy and Evaluation
- Innovative and Priority Related
- Durability and Transportability
- Dissemination Readiness

The Selection Process

The NCRIE selection process includes four steps. First, a program is nominated or nominates itself. Then the program completes an application which describes the program and the application is reviewed by three independent reviewers from the six state region. If selected to continue the process, the program hosts a day long site visit. Following the site visit, the NCRIE staff prepare summaries which are reviewed by the regional advisory board and selection is made.

Nomination

The first step in the NCRIE selection process is for a program to be nominated either by an outside person or through self-nomination. This is a quick and easy form asking for a limited amount of information. The NCRIE staff review these nomination forms for programs on which the NCRIE may need clarification regarding appropriateness of the fit within the priority areas. Upon review and clarification, the program moves on to step two which is application completion.

Over 90 programs were nominated for exemplary status in 1992.

Application

Once the program has been nominated, the NCRIE sends out the application that requests information about the larger organization within which the program operates, the individuals the program serves, program staff; program funding and income, program transportability, program philosophy, program description and activities, and program outcomes. The applications are reviewed by three independent reviewers from around Region V. Reviewers use the application review guide, which is based on the identification criteria, to recommend the program's continuation in the selection process. This guide is provided for the nominated program personnel to use in completing the application.

Thirty-four applications were reviewed by Region V reviewers.

Site Visit

The site visit with two evaluators is hosted by the nominated program personnel. It tyically includes a full day of activities that (1) provide support for the application responses, (2) clarify questions from the application reviewers, and (3) usually provide the first chance for the program staff and NCRIE staff or stakeholders to meet. Some of the activities used to provide site visit information include:

- Interviews with family members, consumers/students, board members, program staff, community collaborators, state organizations, etc.
- Visits to community based program sites.
- Review materials and records; etc.

Site visit information is sent to the nominated program upon recommendation from the application reviewers and NCRIE staff for continuation in the selection process.

Fourteen programs were chosen to organize a site visit.

Eleven programs were identified as "exemplary" in 1992.

Final Selection Determination

The NCRIE staff prepare a summary of application reviewer comments and site visit recommendations. The summary is presented to the advisory board, which makes the final decision regarding exemplary status.

Benefits to Exemplary Status

Exemplary status can benefit both the program identified as "exemplary" and other programs serving individuals with disabilities. For the identified program, exemplary status can mean recognition as an effective program in the region and in the nation. It can mean broader public awareness of services, documented support which could be used to obtain continued or increased funding, and networking opportunities with similar programs. For other programs, it can mean access to programs that are exemplary in their provision of services to individuals. This access can lead to program change and enhancement of services to persons with disabilties around the region.

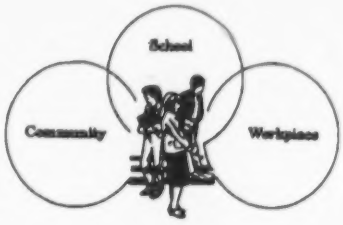
Further Information

The North Central Regional Information Exchange offers service providers many options for assistance in adapting and adopting exemplary service approaches, including (1) telephone consultation, (2) written materials, (3) training through workshops or conferences, and (4) on-site technical assistance or consultation. Readers may contact NCRIE for further information.

Program Profiles:

Interagency Collaboration for Transition

Instructional Programs for Employment
Cooperative Educational Service Agency - CESA #1
2930 South Root River Parkway
West Allis, WI 53227
(414) 546-3000



Mission

The mission of the Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA #1), Instructional Programs for Employment, is to assist students to develop more fully the academic and occupational skills necessary to be successful within the school, family, community and workplace.

Services

The following services are provided by Instructional Programs for Employment: (1) career assessment, (2) individualized vocational profiles, (3) instructional materials and inservices for teachers, (4) interagency coordination, (5) development of volunteer and competitive jobs, and (6) follow-up.

Organizational Context

The Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA #1) is a statutory agency created to facilitate collaboration among local school districts, counties and the state.

CESA #1 began its "Community Employability Project" (CEMP) in 1986 through a state discretionary grant written by Special Education Directors who wanted more diverse employment options for their students. During its first year, the program worked with a two schools and a total of 20 students with disabilities. Since that time, CEMP has restructured and combined its programs into what is now called "Instructional Programs for Employment". Within that structure, CEMP staff provide services to students with disabilities in 11 area schools. An estimated 125 students will receive individualized employment and transition services from Instructional Programs for Employment during the 1992-93 year.

Program Description

A student entering Instructional Programs for Employment in high school would have ideally been involved in CESA #1's middle school program "Prepare for Success". This program exposes students to careers and the world of work. As a student makes the transition to high school, he/she is assessed

Contact Person

Eileen Dagen, Director
(414) 546-3000

Population Served

CESA #1 Instructional Programs for Employment serves students with mild/moderate disabilities.

Exemplary Features

- Parent/Professional Collaboration
- Interagency Collaboration

Program Staff

- *Director*
  1 full-time
  - Supervises staff.
  - Coordinates the project.

- *Transition Specialists*
  3 full-time
  - Act as liaison with other agencies.
  - Perform student evaluations and assessments.
  - Conduct workshops for families.
  - Develop jobs.
  - Provide job and skills training.

- *Vocational Specialist*
  1 full-time
  - Assists students & teachers with vocational goals.
  - Assists teachers in making instructional methods more relevant to the competitive marketplace.

and given opportunities to explore careers of interests and develop job related skills through classroom activities, field trips, speakers, job shadowing and through involvement in in-school jobs.

Eventually students move into a training situation in the community or an after school job with limited hours. When necessary, transition specialists assist students in finding employment. All students are closely supervised and may work with one of the transition specialists or a job coach. At the end of their junior year students are encouraged to begin thinking about planning for exiting high school. Linkages are made with appropriate agencies before students exit school to ensure that students and their families are familiar with the process to access these services if needed. Students who leave school without employment are linked with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) who assists them as they continue to pursue employment options.

Instructional Programs for Employment continues to follow-up through the summer and during the first year after students exit school. They also work closely with DVR during this time, and cooperate with any other adult service agency necessary to assist the student.

Exemplary Components

Instructional Programs for Employment is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Parent/Professional Collaboration: Parents are involved in each step of the program's process. Workshops and in-services focus on areas identified through parent surveys, providing information on topics such as advocacy and assessment. These workshops and trainings assist parents to be better informed and more effective advocates for their children. Parents are represented on the program's board, and their input is considered first when making decisions on programmatic change. In addition, staff follow-up with parents after their children have graduated.

Interagency Collaboration: Through activities that foster interagency committees, linkages and relationships, the program serves as a conduit to bring groups together. It has its own interagency transition council, and is involved in helping participating local school districts set them up as well. Program staff provide direct training to parents and staff from other agencies. In addition, the program addresses needs and develops solutions based on the findings of needs assessments from the participating districts.

Bill's Story

Bill was referred to the Instructional Programs for Employment by his classroom teacher during his first year of high school. At that time, Bill was very unsure of his potential. He was performing at a 5th grade level, and lacked any employment related skills. The outlook for Bill was grim.

During his first year with Instructional Programs for Employment, Bill grudgingly participated in a number of services including (1) career/vocational assessment, (2) career exploration, and (3) direct instruction in pre-employment skills. He wasn't particularly motivated to participate in these services or in attaining part-time employment in the community.

During the second year, Bill was assigned a male transition specialist at his school. This change in staff resulted in many positive changes for Bill. He became a much more willing participant in the employment process, accepting a job in the school library. And, although he still wasn't ready to work in the community, Bill expressed an interest in a future career as a chef or an artist. He also became actively involved in Instructional Programs for Employment's classroom activities and career program.

At the end of his sophomore year, Bill began to work part-time at a local nursing home. He worked in the kitchen, receiving support from the nursing home staff and his transition specialist. After about 6 months, he decided that he did not like the hours, and wanted to work someplace else. The transition specialist set up an interview for Bill at a large pizza restaurant that had previously employed students in the program. Bill followed through and got a job doing bus work. Bill remained on this job for one year. By this time, Bill was developing a positive self-esteem. He began to engage himself in self discovery through which his talents as an artist began to emerge.

In his senior year, he decided that he wanted to work in the dietary kitchen of a nursing again. With the support of Instructional Programs for Employment staff, Bill found a job, applied and interviewed all on his own. He was also linked up with his local Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) office at this time. With DVR's assistance, Bill planned to attend the local technical school and take classes related to his interest in art. Circumstances, however, did not allow Bill to obtain his goal at that time.

Currently Bill is working for a large printing company. As a printing assistant, he is developing valuable work skills and experience, while expanding his interest in art at the same time. Bill's mother has continued her work as an Instructional Programs for Employment Advisory Board member - supporting and assisting the project by sharing her expertise as a parent and employer. Bill, his family, the community, and Instructional Programs for Employment staff have all benefited from the truly collaborative effort that has made Bill's story a success.

Bill, his family, the community, and Instructional Programs for Employment staff have all benefited from the truly collaborative effort that has made Bill's story a success.

Teen Services
Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio
2800 Euclid Avenue, Suite 450
Cleveland, Ohio,44115
(216) 579-1330

Contact Person

Christine C. Loehrke
Associate Director of
Rehabilitation Services
(216) 579-1330

Population Served

Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio's Teen Program serves teens with epilepsy.

Exemplary Features

- Early Involvement and Education
- Attention to Psychosocial Issues
- Family Involvement

Mission

The Teen Services program reflects the Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio's mission to promote and assist in education, counseling, training and obtaining and maintaining employment for persons with epilepsy.

Services

The following services are provided by the Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio's Teen Services program: (1) epilepsy education, (2) personal/social adjustment and vocational curriculum, (3) counseling, (4) support groups, (5) recreational activities, (6) job search, (7) paid work experience, and (9) one year follow-up.

Organizational Context

Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio (EFNEO) is a private, nonprofit social service and rehabilitation organization which provides a wide range of services for persons with epilepsy and their families. EFNEO promotes and assists in education, counseling, training, advocacy, employment assistance, and information and referral for persons with epilepsy. The organization also provides educational programs relating to epilepsy for families, the general public, paraprofessionals and professional audiences.

In 1990, EFNEO's Program Evaluation indicated a lack of services for teens with epilepsy in Cuyahoga County. As a result, the Teen Program was established with "start-up" funds procured from the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission. In 1991, the program was expanded, through a grant from the Cleveland Foundation, to the Cleveland Public Schools System. EFNEO's Teen Program is currently involved with 15 high schools in the Greater Cleveland area, serving over 40 teens with epilepsy between the ages of 13 and 21.

Program Description

The Teen Program is one of only two transition programs for teens with epilepsy in the country. The primary goal of the Teen Program is to insure a timely transition into competitive employment or alternative vocational options for high school students. The Program targets all teens with epilepsy

regardless of the severity of their condition or the level of control of their seizures. It is unique in that it takes a holistic approach to service provision, combining extensive psychosocial interventions with a comprehensive vocational orientation, in order to maximize the adolescent's ultimate success in social and employment settings. Whenever possible, programming is conducted in student's natural environments, such as school training sessions and community work experiences.

Staff work collaboratively with families and school/agency personnel of the involved teen through support groups, advocacy, and education services. Working together in this way ensures that each individual's needs are more appropriately met, monitored and evaluated. Upon completion of the program or graduation from high school, students are referred to an appropriate placement or training program for further experience if needed. Follow-up services begin upon completion of the individualized program and continue up to one year.

Exemplary Components

Teen Services of EFNEO is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Early Involvement and Education: The program intervenes with students as early as age 13. Providing education and support at an early age helps teens understanding of how their individual seizure condition affects their lives, giving them a head start on the road to adulthood.

Attention to Psychosocial Issues: Adolescence is a turbulent time for all young people. For teens with epilepsy, it can be exacerbated by the occurrence of seizures which they cannot control. This creates a devastating situation for some young people. For this reason, The Teen Program is committed to its focus on the psychosocial issues with which teens with Epilepsy are faced . Learning to understand their disability enhances their ability to succeed both socially as well as vocationally.

Family Involvement: Studies have shown that positive parental attitudes are directly related to the development of positive coping patterns by the child with epilepsy. The open, candid sharing about the condition and its consequences among family members can create a positive, unified approach to epilepsy-related issues. The Teen Program facilitate this outcome by providing Parent Support Groups and by involving the families in the development of the teen's individual treatment plan.

Program Staff

- *Manager*
  1 full time
  - Administrates program.
  - Supervises staff.
  - Recruits students.
  - Performs public relations activities.
  - Conducts vocational program aspects.

- *Social Worker*
  1 full-time
  - Provides counseling to support groups.
  - Teaches activities.

- *Secretary*
  1 part-time
  - Performs clerical support services.

- *Associate Director*
  1 part-time
  - Performs administrative/ fiscal activities.

"Teen Services program...has been a great help to Linda.. and I don't know what I would have done without it."

Linda's Mother

Linda's Story

Nineteen year old Linda was diagnosed with epilepsy at the age of two. Despite numerous changes in her multiple medications, she continued to experience weekly simple partial and psychomotor (complex partial) seizures which were most time unpredictable. Although her mother had been in contact with Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio (EFNEO) for support, Linda did not agree to see agency staff until her high school guidance counselor contacted the Teen Services program.

At a meeting during her junior year, Linda presented a distant, non-verbal, frightened personality with an inability to make direct eye contact. School reports indicated that she had memory and concentration problems in class, often fell behind in homework assignments, had no friends, and was called names by fellow students. In the process of developing an Individual Assistance Plan, Linda, her mother, school personnel, and EFNEO staff agreed program interventions would be applied slowly to give Linda time to set her own pace.

After several invitations, Linda began to attend Teen Support Group meetings at EFNEO. From this experience, she slowly developed a trusting relationship with agency staff. This association led to Linda's agreement to have her seizure condition re-evaluated at a major medical facility in Cleveland. This process resulted in a change to only one medication, new to Linda's treatment protocol. Consequently, she gained much more control over her seizure frequency and now experiences less anxiety about having seizures.

Linda also enrolled in the Teen program's "Personal Adjustment" and "Vocational" components. While completing these classes, the treatment team noted that Linda was becoming more academically involved, was developing school friendships, and had begun dating. She was also more confident in exploring work opportunities. EFNEO staff helped her secure a job as a receptionist in the photographer's studio of a local retail store. Now that she has graduated from high school, she is pursing her career goal of cosmetology with the help of program staff who facilitated Linda's referral to the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission - Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) for training tuition.

Linda may need additional support services in the future which can continue to affirm her interpersonal dealing and advocate for her medical treatment. However, she has accomplished a great deal in increasing her self-esteem and her vocational opportunities. Linda' s mother says that the "Teen Services program...has been a great help to Linda.. and I don't know what I would have done without it."

Hamilton County Transition to Work Project
Great Oaks Joint Vocational School District
7710 Reading Road, Suite 003
Cincinnati, Ohio 45237
(513) 821-1484

Mission

The Mission of the Hamilton County Transition to Work Project is to assist students/consumers with severe disabilities to successfully complete their transition from school to community-based competitive employment through interagency collaboration and cooperation.

Services

The following services are available to students/consumers participating in the Hamilton County Transition to Work Project: (1) vocational evaluation, (2) vocational training, (3) instructional support, (4) job development and placement, (5) on-the job training and follow-up, and (6) transition and referral.

Organizational Context

The Great Oaks Joint Vocational School District is a vocational education institution serving 35 school districts in 12 counties in Southwestern Ohio. Established in 1970, Great Oaks provides vocational training and placement services to over 2,600 secondary students and adults at four career development centers and two adult employment and training centers.

In the mid 1980's, The Great Oaks District participated on an interagency task force formed to address the problem of students with severe disabilities graduating from school without employment or meaningful day programming. Resulting from that task force was the Hamilton County Transition to Work Project, a collaborative activity funded by the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and administered by the Great Oaks Joint Vocational School District. The purpose of the project is to assist students with disabilities from school districts served by the Hamilton County Office of Education, Great Oaks Vocational School District, the Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and the Cincinnati Public Schools to achieve and maintain competitive employment. Since the project was started in October of 1985, 177 students have been referred to the project from 36 different classrooms in 25 school district.

Contact Persons

Maggie Hess, Supervisor
(513) 771-8925

Mike Mudersbach
Transition Coordinator
(513) 821-1484

Population Served

The Hamilton County Transition to Work Project serves students with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 22 at the time of initial referral.

Exemplary Features

- Interagency Collaboration
- Shared Vision
- Influenced Change in Traditional Staff Roles

Program Staff

- *Special Needs Supervisor*
  1 part-time
  - Supervises & coordinates activities.
- *Transition Coordinator*
  1 full-time
  - Supervises daily project operations.
  - Act as liaison with participating agencies.
- *Job Training Coordinator*
  1 full-time
  - Develops jobs.
  - Coordinates school services.
- *Job Trainers*
  8 part-time
  - Provide one-on-one support to consumer at job site.
- *Transition Secretary*
  1 part-time
  - Performs clerical duties.

Program Description

The goal of the Hamilton County Transition to Work Project is to achieve competitive employment of up to 25 students with severe disabilities per year through the use of job trainers or job coaches. Prior to beginning a job, the job trainer works with the student to identify his/her optimal learning styles by performing a learning assessment. When a potential job site has been located, the job trainer analyzes the tasks involved in the job, as well as the best way to teach the job to the student. Following the assessment and analysis, a job match meeting is held to determine if the student's interests, skills and abilities match those required by the potential job. If a successful match is made, the job trainer assists the student with one-on-one training and support at the job site until the student has mastered the job and is working independently. Successful completion of the on-the-job training component occurs only when the consumer has maintained successful competitive employment without trainer assistance for at least 60 days. Because the project is funded by Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, services can be provided to students after graduation as well.

Exemplary Components

Hamilton County Transition to Work Project is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Interagency Collaboration: The project has fostered joint partnerships/ collaborations, bringing together a variety of people with diverse viewpoints. There is a strong commitment by participating agencies to continue the project, and to work together to address issues and solve problems as needed. This was particularly evident by the willingness of the agencies to share the cost of the project when its funding was cut.

Shared Vision: The project has influenced the overall philosophy and program activities of the agencies with whom they collaborate. Examples of these changes include: (1) involvement of adult service agencies at an earlier age, and (2) initiation of programs for students with disabilities that promote peer collaboration/cooperative learning, self advocacy, and promotion of choice making.

Influenced Change in Traditional Staff Roles: The project has been a forerunner for transition within the community resulting in (1) a change/ expansion in traditional staff roles, (2) standards for job coach training, (3) a solidified role of job coaches, and (4) a heightened awareness and positive attitude change in employers.

Jack's Story

Jack has been employed successfully as a lockbox clerk for a local bank, working forty hours per week and receiving full benefits, for over two years. As a lock box clerk, Jack is responsible for entering data regarding corporate accounts with the bank. Jack received the support of three job trainers from the Hamilton County Transition to Work Project while learning the job. In addition to mastering the necessary skills to do the job, Jack also learned to independently use the public transportation system to get to and from work. Jack's accuracy in his job has always exceeded the very stringent requirements of the lockbox position, and with a number of modifications developed by the Job Trainers, Jack was able to reach and maintain the work speed required by the job.

In addition to the hard work Jack put into achieving the success he has experienced on the job, he has received the support from a number of education and rehabilitation agencies working in collaboration. Jack's initial school placement was in a county run program focusing on mastery of daily living skills and functioning independently in the community. Jack's teacher saw the potential for further vocational training and his home school district agreed to provide instruction in general clerical activities in the morning. The home school district also provided job trainer support to Jack on clerical placements through the Federal Unpaid Work Experience Program.

The following summer, Jack was employed in the Summer Youth Employment Program through the state Rehabilitation Services Commission doing data entry work. From there, Jack entered the Joint Vocational School where he attended the administrative support assistant class with the support of a job trainer. When his Summer Youth Employment position ended, it was converted to a student aide position to continue his work experience.

Jack successfully completed the training at the Vocational School and job development was begun. Because of some limitations in communication and expressive language, the search for an appropriate placement was extensive. During the job search, Jack's student aide position ended and he re-entered a Federal Unpaid Work Experience position to maintain his skills. After many leads did not work out, the lockbox position was developed with accommodations. Jack completed and passed the required testing for the position and was hired.

Jack's success on this job would probably never have occurred without the collaborative efforts of Jack, his family, the county school class, his home school, and the Transition to Work Project. These agencies, working in isolation, would never have been able to provide the support needed to insure this success.

Jack's success on this job would probably never have occurred without the collaborative efforts of Jack, his family, the county school class, his home school, and the Transition to Work Project.

Job Options in Business and Industry
Penta County Vocational School
30095 Oregon Road
Perrysburg, Ohio 43551
(419) 666-1120

Contact Person

Charles Gibbons, Director
(419) 666-1120

Population Served

Job Options for Business and Industry serves young adults with special needs between the ages of 16-22.

Exemplary Components

- Interagency Collaboration
- A Future First Approach

Mission

Job Options in Business and Industry's mission is to ensure that students with disabilities are afforded comprehensive vocational opportunities that will enhance their contributions and full participation in the community.

Services

The following services are provided by Job Options in Business: (1) on-going assessment, (2) student screening, (3) resume writing, (4) reference coordination, (5) job development, (6) employment screening, (7) compatibility analysis, (8) targeted jobs tax credit, (9) ARC funding coordination, (10) job coaching, (11) transportation, (12) follow-along, (13) Private Industry Council eligibility coordination, (14) MR/DD eligibility coordination, (15) vocational evaluation, (16) counseling, and (17) referral to outside agencies.

Organizational Context

Penta County Vocational School is a public school which has provided vocational education and related services to students in 16 school districts within 5 counties since 1965. It has three major divisions which include Penta High School, Penta Adult Service Center and Penta Skill Center. All divisions have transition from school to work as a major focus.

In 1986, Penta established its Job Options in Business and Industry (JOBI) program to address the needs of students with disabilities who were not being adequately served under their current programming. JOBI is a supported training and employment program which allows students opportunities to gain exposure and experience in a variety of positions in their community.

The program involves a process which is outcome driven. Job placement is the goal for all participants. An 85-90% placement and retention rate was maintained in 1992.

Program Description

Job Options in Business and Industry uses a supported work model as its basis. This work model is a highly structured and individualized system of

training, placement and follow-along. It utilizes the assistance of a job trainer who works one-on-one with students in acquiring skills and increasing positive work behaviors.

JOBI is based on three phases. A student can be referred to any or all of the phases, however most students are better prepared for their future if they participate in all three phases. Phase I involves a curriculum that prepares students to function as independently as possible in post-school environments. Students receive training in school and natural environments across the domestic, vocational, recreation/leisure and community domains of the curriculum. Phase I also involves working at various training sites within the school building. Phase II involves working at job sites in the communities surrounding Penta. These sites are paid positions which begin at least at minimum wage. As in Phase I, a job trainer works with the student on learning the job. As he/she becomes independent on the job and is successful at meeting the job requirements to the employer's satisfaction, the trainer gradually begins to fade out until the student is doing the job on his/her own. The trainer and employment site supervisor will continue to monitor the student's performance and share all progress with the student and his/her family. Students work at a training site for approximately 3 to 4 months and then rotate to a different site. This rotation allows the students to gain a variety of job experiences in different work environments.

Phase III involves permanent employment in the student's community. The job training coordinator works with the family and student to find a job match between the student's interests and capabilities and the needs of business. Phase III usually occurs during the student's last year of high school. During this last year, the job training coordinator will coordinate the referral to the County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities which will provide services for the student after graduation.

Although the school to work transition is gradual, the final placement can be somewhat of an adjustment for the student and his/her family. Families and staff work closely together to ensure the transition is as smooth and comfortable as possible with natural supports built into the process.

Exemplary Components

Job Options in Business and Industry is exemplary in their provisions of services to individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are espeically noteworthy:

Interagency Collaboration: A crucial part of the transition process is to refer students to the agencies for lifelong job follow along once they graduate. This linkage with adult agency service providers begins at least six months to one year prior to graduation, with meetings located on-site at Penta. Because these services are based upon eligibility criteria per agency, the Job Training Coordinator is responsible for facilitating and coordinating the information and meetings.

A Future First Approach: Unlike most programs which have students plan from the present to the future, JOBI staff help students look to the future and plan back to the present. This requires students and their families to perceive themselves as contributing adult members of society.

Program Staff

- *Job Training Coordinators*
  3 full-time
  - Perform job development.
  - Supervise job coaches.
  - Provide technical assistance.
- *Multi-handicapped Instructors*
  2 full-time
  - Provide community based instruction and functional curriculum.
- *Instructional Assistants*
  2 full-time
  - Assist instructor in primary job roles.
- *Job Coaches*
  9 part-time
  - Provide training for students on job and job related skills.

Geoff's Story

When asked what he gained from the program, Geoff said it was learning how to solve problems and knowing how to be a good employee.

It has been one year since Geoff graduated form high school at the age of 22. He is currently working in a maintenance position at a local Wal Mart store. Geoff lives in an apartment with a roommate and receives supportive services from an adult agency provider.

Geoff was referred from his home school district to Penta Skill Center in the winter of 1986. Initially, he participated in vocational evaluation to assist in developing his educational program plan. During the post evaluation conference with Geoff and his family, Geoff's team recommended he participate in a Vocational Adjustment and Basic Living skills program. From this program, Geoff was referred to the JOBI program the following year.

When Geoff began in the program, his transition team assisted him in identifying goals he wished to meet in his adult life. Geoff expressed that he wanted to work in a service related job and that he wanted to have his own apartment. With these two main goals as a guide, Geoff's program plan began to evolve from the future back to the present. Because Geoff decided to defer graduation, his team recommended that he participate in a progression through all three phases of the program. By participation in the phases, Geoff was able to increase his skills and gain experiences towards attaining his goals. In phase 1, Geoff learned the basics in managing an apartment and accessing community resources. During phase 2, Geoff worked at four different businesses enhancing his job and employability skills. By his senior year, Geoff specifically targeted his desired job and secured employment at a local restaurant. He learned his job quickly and his job coach was able to fade after three and a half weeks. The linkage was made for adult services after graduation. This adult agency was able to assist Geoff in locating an apartment and a compatible roommate to share expenses. Recently, Geoff chose to secure another job closer to his apartment with the assistance of the adult agency.

Geoff is currently receiving job coach services to increase his independence on the job. He is making new friends on the job and in his community. When asked what he gained from the program, Geoff said it was learning how to solve problems and knowing how to be a good employee.

Transition Resouce Agency Council (TRAC)
8701 N. Menard
Morton Grove, IL 60053
(708) 965-2502

Mission

The mission of the Transition Resouce Agency Council is to serve the employment and vocational training needs of persons with disabilities in Illinois' Maine and Niles Township areas.

Services

The following services are provided by theTransition Resouce Agency Council: (1) job preparation, (2) job placement, (3) case management, (4) on-the-job training, (5)follow-up, (6) transporation, (7) job development, (8) counseling and referral services, and (9) job coaching.

Organizational Context

The Transition Resouce Agency Council (TRAC) is an interagency organization which serves the employment and training needs of persons with disabilities in Illinois' Maine and Niles Township areas. With nearly a dozen members, TRAC members serve persons who have learning disabilities, behavioral challenges, developmental disabilities or physical disabilities.

TRAC was formed in 1989 in response to the mutual consensus among area professionals that sharing information, clientele, and job leads would improve overall services for the individuals with disabilities they serve, as well as to the companies wanting to hire them. By sharing costs and providing "in-kind" services, TRAC members work collaboratively to provide a wide variety of employment, residential and educational services. Over 170 individuals with disabilities were served in 1992 alone.

Program Description

Monthly meetings provide the framework for TRAC member agencies to coordinate job development and client referral activities, as well as to address the school to work transition needs of the students with disabilities and non-transitioning youth they serve. TRAC meetings also provide an educational forum for discussions and problem solving regarding issues of mutual interest such as transportation, evaluation of client skills and interests, funding agency regulations, and program staff training and development. In addition, member agencies research potential employment program funding sources from private

Contact Person

Diane Starkey
Vocational Adjustment
Counselor/DORS
(708) 965-2502

Population Served

The Transition Resource Agency Council serves individuals with disabilities.

Exemplary Components

- Resource Sharing
- Improved Services Through Collaboration
- Commitment to Staff Development Education
- Mentoring

Program Staff

TRAC member agencies include:

- Glenkirk
- IAM Cares
- Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Maine Township Special Education Program
- Niles Township Department of Special Education
- N.S.A.R.
- Orchard Village
- Shore Training Center
- The Center for the Rehabilitation and Training of Persons with Disabilities, Supported Employment Program

foundations to state or federal grants, in order to expand area employment programs and meet the growing needs of people with disabilities in their service areas.

Exemplary Components

TRAC is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Resource Sharing: TRAC members pool their resources and work together instead of competing. For example, their collaboration might involve a special education student with disabilities from Niles or Maine Township high school who is transported to the worksite by N.S.A.R. and then coached by The Center for the Rehabilitation and Training of Persons with Disabilities.

Improved Services Through Collaboration: Members meet on a monthly basis to coordinate services, share information, and provide a resource network for all participants. These activities have expanded the wealth of knowledge of TRAC members, and improved their ability to offer comprehensive case management services to their students and clients.

Commitment to Staff Development and Education: TRAC coordinates educational opportunities for the employment program staff of their member agencies. Some of the topics include, (1) effective marketing of workers to area employers, (2) job coaching "best practices", (3) Job trends, (4) employer presentations on pros/cons of supported employment, (5) supported employment's impact on social security earnings, and (6) other topics of mutual interest among members.

Mentoring: TRAC members work closely with businesses to identity mentors for clients within the company.

Valerie's Story

Valerie, a 22 year old 1992 high school graduate, has met with success at OTI, a telemarketing company. Valerie lives in suburban Chicago with her mother and younger sister. A transition plan was initiated when she was in her second year of high school to address the following concerns: (1) unidentified vocational skills and interests; (2) weight gain; (3) inappropriate requests of peers and co-workers for money to buy food; and (4) a fear of crossing the street probably due to having been hit by a car twice.

The Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services became involved to develop a plan that would allow Val to have several work experiences which would hopefully lead to a permanent job. School district job coaching and the JTPA summer program were added to the interdisciplinary plan. Transition services expanded to include mobility training, residential planning, counseling for weight control, vocational evaluation, SSDI guardianship information, and leisure activity recommendations for post high school.

The plan was further enhanced via TRAC. TRAC identified Orchard Village who was able to recommend OTI based on Val's work experience and interests. The school district paid for transportation and the DORS/STEP grant covered expenses of providing the job coach services. A task analysis of the job was performed and a behavior management program was implemented.

As graduation approached, additional concerns arose regarding future funding sources for Val's services which would no longer be provided by Orchard Village after she finished school. TRAC was able to create, with Valerie's input, a program that allowed THE CENTER to accept Val into their Supported Employment Program. Because THE CENTER had not yet initiated their transportation project with PACE, the North Suburban Transit System, Shore Training Center (with financial assistance from DORS) filled in to provide her with a ride to and from work.

Valerie has since successfully completed a Mentor Workshop through TRAC, DORS, and the University of Illinois. She is identifying her own mentor at OTI who will help her socially. An Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE) through the auspices of the Social Securities Administration will help pay for PACE and job coach services in the future. Valerie attends a local health club and continues to make new friends. TRAC members will continue their collaborative efforts to ensure the implementation of creative strategies for Valerie's on-going success.

TRAC members will continue their collaborative efforts to ensure the implementation of creative strategies for Valerie's on-going success.

Wood Lane
Transition Program

Wood Lane Adult Services-Transition Program
Wood County Board of Mental Retardation/ Developmental Disabilities
11160 East Gypsy Lane Road
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402
(419) 352-5115

Contact Person

Melinda Slusser
Director of Adult Services
(419) 352-5115

Teresa Fulk
Community Employment Services Supervisor
(419)352-5059

Population Served

The Transition program of Wood Lane serves youth and adults with developmental disabilities.

Exemplary Components

- Collaboration
- Inclusion With Non-disabled Workers
- Comprehensive Planning Process

Mission

The Transition Program reflects the Wood County Board of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD) mission to provide quality vocational and habilitation services to meet the holistic needs of the consumer leading toward an inter-dependent relationship between community and individual.

Services

The following services are provided by the Wood County Board of MR/DD through their Transition Program: (1) career development group, (2) occupational work sampling, (3) work evaluation, (4) short term transition sites, (5) mobile work crew, (6) employee leasing, (7) job development, (8) job training, (9) related work skills training, (10) habilitation services, (11) case management, (12) psychological services, (13) follow along services, and (14) employee support options.

Organizational Context

The Wood County Board of MR/DD is a public training and rehabilitation program which exists primarily to offer comprehensive life-spanning services to individuals with moderate, severe, and profound mental retardation, and other developmental disabilities, as well as to provide supportive services to those individuals' families. These services are dedicated to the development of individual skills in educational, social, emotional, physical and employment areas, allowing each individual to develop an interdependent relationship within their own community.In 1985, the Board began its Community Employment Services Program (CES) to offer adults with mental retardation/ developmental disabilities an alternative to sheltered workshops.

The Transition program was developed as a part of CES, with the intent to offer a wider range of vocational options. Currently, these programs are funded by support from a variety of federal, state, and local sources including: (1) Chapter 1 - student transition training (2) Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission. (3) Private Industry Council, and (4) other grant-in-aid funding. With a concentration on options outside of sheltered employment, these programs have successfully placed over 110 individuals with disabilities in over 170 employment and training sites around Wood County.

Program Description

Individuals enter the transition program through referrals from the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, the public schools, or by the individuals themselves. Upon referral, a work evaluation is scheduled to offer insight on work skills, and attitudes, as well as to provide the individual with some basis on which to make future job choices. Following the eligibility determination process and work evaluation, an intake meeting is held with the individual, their families, and friends or advocates. This intake team determines what supports are needed, coordinates services and outlines any additional information required. If the team decides that the individual would benefit from work experience or more intense support on the job, the job developer then secures a transitional site. Prior to the end of the transition site, a meeting is held to review options, offer new alternative and seek opportunities to match employment to the interest of the individual.

Individuals exit the transition program upon placement in a community employment setting where supports have been faded to follow-along services only. Should future assessments indicate a need to re-enter the transition program, this is done through the Individual Habilitation/Educational Plan process.

Exemplary Components

The Transition Program of Wood County Board of MR/DD is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Collaboration: The Transition Program is designed to ensure that individual needs are met without overlapping services from different agencies. Transition staff work with the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, Private Industry Council, Department of Human Services and Social Securities Administration. Cooperative agreements have been written with Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission and Private Industry Council to utilize funding for job coaching services.

Inclusion With Non-disabled Workers: Out of more than 90 persons that are currently working through CES, approximately 65 are individual placements. This means that the individual is hired directly by the employer and works side by side with others who do not have disabilities. This allows persons with disabilities to rely upon the natural supports of the work environment.

Comprehensive Planning Process: The planning process used by the Transition program allows for support services to be coordinated regarding the whole life picture of the individual, not just a snap shot of the individual's vocational needs. In doing so, residential, personal, leisure, and educational goals and desires can be addressed in conjunction with one another.

Program Staff

- *Habilitation Specialists II*
  2 full-time
  - Evaluate work skills & interests.
- *Habilitation Specialist II / Work Evaluator*
  1 full-time
  - Completes work evaluations.
  - Determines work skills.
  - Recommends placement.
- *Habilitation Specialist II / Follow Along*
  1 full-time
  - Provides follow along services.
  - Secures supports for jobs.
  - Completes paperwork for employment.
- *Job Trainers/Crew Trainers*
  1 full-time & 4 part-time
  - Provide job coaching activities.
- *Job Developers*
  2 full-time
  - Develop employment.

Terri proved herself to be a competent worker, interested in doing a good job and accepting responsibility for her job.

Terri's Story

When Terri was 17 years old she was referred to a county in Northwestern Ohio because appropriate services were not available at that time in her county of residence. Various educational and residential options had been tried, but none seemed to meet her particular needs. Initial meetings involved representatives from both school districts, County Boards of MR/DD, and case management offices, as well as Terri, her mother/guardian, a Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) counselor, and residential staff from the foster home at which she resided.

Information available on Terri included: (1) no previous vocational experiences; (2) limited verbal communication skills; (3) autistic-like behaviors (disturbed by changes in routine and persons with whom she interacted.) Additionally, Terri had clearly indicated that she did not like being in school. Therefore, the team recommended that Community Employment Services (CES) be utilized to provide her with a job exposure opportunity.

Terri's first vocational placement required her to work only one and a half hours per day in a setting where there was little interaction with others. She was driven to the job site daily by two staff from her foster home. With the help of the foster home staff, as well a job coach provided by CES and funded through RSC, Terri learned her work routine. Terri remained at this job for six weeks before moving on to another work experience.

The plan for Terri was to slowly expand her repertoire of work skills and appropriate behaviors by demanding slightly more of her at each site. Implementation of this plan resulted in positive changes in Terri's behavior during her second job assignment. She began coming to work accompanied by just one staff from home, and eventually learned to perform her duties with only the job coach for support.

Terri proved herself to be a competent worker, interested in doing a good job and accepting responsibility for her work. Part of her training on the job involved learning to use an electronic communication device with her coach/ supervisor. In addition, Terri learned to ride the local school bus independently to work. Changes also began to take place in Terri's behavior at home. She became increasingly independent in getting ready for work, and often talked about selecting and buying the clothes that she wore.

Over the next 13 months, Terri progressed through three more transitional work experiences, each one demanding that she she accept more responsibility for her tasks as well as her behavior. She continued to make great strides both at work and at home. Work became the focal point of her day. She learned to pack her lunch, use the public transportation system, and even to adjust her routine at home to meet fluctuations in her work schedule! Terri has recently celebrated her first anniversary working as a sorter for a local mail service.

The number of persons and variety of services that continue to pull together to help ensure Terri's success is sometimes overwhelming. However, that kind of cooperation between schools, County Board of MR/DD, case management, and local community-base service providers is what was necessary to show Terri just what she was capable of accomplishing. With her 21st birthday fast approaching, it is hoped that such continued collaboration will provide Terri with the support necessary for her to maintain employment and move into a more independent living arrangement.

Program Profiles:

Supported Employment

Dakota, Inc.
Supported Employment Services
680 O'Neill Drive
Eagan, Minnesota, 55121
(612) 454-2732

DAKOTA

Mission

The supported employment program reflects Dakota, Inc.'s mission to assist the community and people challenged by disabilities to live and work together.

Services

The following services are provided by Dakota, Inc. through their supported employment program: (1) assessment and planning, (2) job development and placement, (3) job coaching, and (4) transportation.

Organizational Context

Dakota, Inc. is a private, nonprofit, day training and habilitation organization serving 415 people in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. It was formed by parents and advocates to serve children and adults with developmental disabilities. With funding from county service contracts, the Department of Rehabilitation Services, and federal medical assistance, Dakota has provided individualized community services since 1965. All services are governed by a volunteer board of directors comprised of parents, professionals, and community members.

In 1985, Dakota, Inc. began its supported employment program. That year, five persons with disabilities earned a total of $840. In 1992, 284 people earned nearly three-quarters of a million dollars working in 116 businesses.

Program Description

Dakota works hard to discover people's interests and supports them as they make choices about their lives. For those who are interested in working, Dakota finds jobs in community businesses and provides on-the-job support that ranges from full-time supervision to biweekly check-ins by job coaches.

Dakota has two job developers on staff. However, job prospecting is everyone's responsibility. They target corporations: (1) with more than 500 employees, (2) that deal with a great deal of paper, and (3) that see themselves as good corporate citizens. Once inside a business, job coaches are responsible for becoming part of the corporate culture in order to facilitate integration of

Contact Person

Hans Swemle, Training Analyst
(612) 454-2732

Population Served

Dakota, Inc.'s supported employment program serves adults with developmental disabilities.

Exemplary Components

- Information Managment
- A Learning Organization
- Marketing & Public Relations

Program Staff

The supported employment program of Dakota, Inc. is maintained by 38 full-time staff and 16 part-time staff. Job positions and responsibilities include:

- *Regional Directors*
  - Manage funding contracts
- *Training Analysts*
  - Provide staff training & human resource support.
  - Provide consultation to teams.
- *Job Developers*
  - Provide job development for enclave employment & individual employment.
- *Service Team Leaders*
  - Manage service teams.
  - Supervise staff.
  - Coordinate team employment objectives.
- *Employment Training Specialists*
  - Provide job site support.
  - Provide case management.
  - Provide individual job development.
- *Service Specialists*
  - Provide job site support.

the employees with disabilities. Job coaches continually look for new opportunities within the business, both for additional workers and for career exploration for those already employed.

Dakota's supported employment services are successful because the agency has worked with people with disabilities, families, friends, employers, coworkers, and community organizations to develop a shared vision. This partnership allows people with disabilities to discover their interests, make choices, and enrich their own lives.

Exemplary Components

Dakota, Inc.'s supported employment program is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Information Management: Information management has long been an important performance evaluation tool for the agency. The community employment report, for example, enables Dakota to track the number of people working, agency employment rate, numbers of hours worked, wages, and retention rate for individuals on a daily basis. In 1991, an automation project was begun which will add to information management agency-wide and give all staff ready access to a computer terminal or laptop. Dakota designed a custom client information system to enhance quality and accountability and streamline the administrative process.

A Learning Organization: Dakota, Inc. has the goal of becoming a "learning organization." The agency has implemented a learning system that includes a series of training modules with more than 270 competencies. A new, formal staff mentoring system will develop and maintain Dakota's internal skill base and recognize key staff for their knowledge and expertise.

Marketing and Public Relations: Marketing and public relations efforts focus on building partnerships with the business community. Corporate partners have contributed services in printing, design, video production, marketing and training. For the past three years, more than 100 business sponsors have assisted in producing the Dakota funfest, a two-day fundraising event that has boosted Dakota's visibility in the community. Each April, Dakota hosts a thank-you celebration that draws 400 employers, volunteers, donors, and people with disabilities and their families.

Fred's Story

Fred has held a clerical position at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota (BCBSM) since May 1989. He removes staples from claims, tapes cards to documents, and stuffs envelopes. Challenged by cerebral palsy, Fred is part of a team of six workers supported by one job coach.

Referred to Dakota, Inc. in 1987 at age 21, developers placed him at a Marriott laundry where he pressed sheets and folded towels, but he craved more contact with people. Next, he wrapped silverware and baked pizzas at Pizza Hut, but had difficulty standing at the ovens. When a position opened up at BCBSM, Fred took it. He now works 25-30 hours per week, is more self-directed, and looks for tasks when finished with an assignment. He is also learning assertiveness skills, letting others know when something is wrong.

For exercise, Fred uses crutches to walk through the BCBSM complex every day after lunch. A sociable man, he introduces himself to coworkers and has learned to hold conversations. His job coach cited, as an example of his increased integration, the day a BCBSM employee she had never met invited Fred to a going-away party for one of the people he had befriended on his walks. Fred attended the party on his own, chatting with coworkers as an equal.

Fred now works 25-30 hours per week, he is more self-directed, and looks for tasks when finished with an assignment.

Employment Services
Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio
2800 Euclid Avenue, Suite 450
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216) 579-1330

Contact Person

Christine C. Loehrke
Associate Director of
Rehabilitation Services
(216) 579-1330

Population Served

Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio's Employment Services program serves adults with Epilepsy.

Exemplary Components

- Unique Population Served
- Competitive Employment Outcomes
- Serving Individuals with Severe Disabilities
- Family Involvement

Mission

The Employment Services program reflects the Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio's mission to promote and assist in education, counseling, training and obtaining and maintaining employment for persons with epilepsy.

Services

The following services are provided by the Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio through their employment services program: (1) pre-vocational training, (2) personal/social/recreational adjustment training, (3) community-based work adjustment, (4) job seeking skills training, (5) job club, (6) job development/placement, (7) job coaching, and (8) follow along.

Organizational Context

Epilepsy Foundation of Northeast Ohio (EFNEO) is a private, nonprofit social service and rehabilitation organization which provides a wide range of services for persons with epilepsy and their families. EFNEO promotes and assists in education, counseling, training, advocacy, employment assistance, and information and referral for persons with epilepsy. The organization also provides educational programs relating to epilepsy for families, the general public, paraprofessionals and professional audiences.

In 1988, following an extensive review of its client's needs and characteristics, EFNEO combined its existing vocational programs to form the Employment Services Program. This new, comprehensive program offered participants a broad continuum along which they could move toward unsubsidized employment at an individualized pace. Over 82% of those individuals receiving work adjustment services between 1988 and 1992 were placed into competitive employment after spending an average of 7.2 months in the program.

Currently, the program maintains a diversified funding base which includes: (1) the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, (2) JTPA (city and county), (3) the Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board, (4) the Cuyahoga County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and (5) the Cuyahoga County United Way.

Program Description

EFNEO's Employment Services program offers a completely client-centered process. As individuals request or are referred for vocational assistance, they are scheduled for an initial appointment with a member of the Vocational Services staff. Since many persons with epilepsy experience a difficult time disclosing information regarding their condition, this first interview can take place where the individual feels most comfortable such as their home or somewhere in their community. All gathered information is presented to the Foundation's "Intake Review Committee": an interdisciplinary body which assists the "presenter " in assessing the client's vocational needs and in ensuring that the client has chosen the program path affording optimal chance of successful job placement.

The broad spectrum of employment preparation needs among clients requires that an Individualized Assistance Plan (IAP) be developed for all program participants. The Vocational Services Department provides for distinct program options offered to clients based upon those individualized needs assessed by the staff. At any point during this vocational programming, a staff member can facilitate an intra-agency referral for services from EFNEO's Social Service Department on behalf of a client. Program participants exit the program when, to the extent possible, they have achieved the goal of their IAP or have demonstrated that they can no longer benefit from service, and are therefore referred to alternative and more appropriate service programming.

Exemplary Components

Employment services of EFNEO is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Unique Population Served: Employment for persons with epilepsy has a long history of being a major problem. It has been found that the average employer will not hire a person he/she knows has had a seizure within one year of the job application. In response to this documented need, the EFNEO has been providing employment services that emphasize vocational as well as psychosocial skill development to this unique population since 1977.

Competitive Employment Outcomes: Over a three year period ending in December of 1991, 82% of all persons served in community-based Work Adjustment obtained competitive employment upon "graduation".

Serving Individuals with Severe Disabilities: After discovering their clients with the most severe disabilities were spending 64% more time in programs and comprised 100% of the non-positive terminations from their Work Adjustment program, EFNEO secured funding to expand its employment service to include intense, highly individualized attention toward the special needs of this sub-population. Staff positions were doubled in order to accommodate these additional services which include intensive Personal/ Social/Recreational Adjustment Training and Job Coaching.

Program Staff

- *Director of Vocational Services*
  1 full-time
  - Supervises the department.
  - Develops jobs.
  - Performs administrative duties.

- *Coordinator of Rehabilitation Programming*
  1 full-time
  - Develops work adjustment sites.
  - Teaches pre-vocational classes.

- *Vocational Instructor*
  1 full-time
  - Teaches personal/adjustment skills.
  - Provides job coaching activities.

- *Employment Specialist*
  1 full-time
  - Provides job development.
  - Provides job seeking skills training.
  - Provides job coaching activities.

- *Secretary*
  1 part-time
  - Performs clerical support services.

- *Associate Director/ Rehabilitation Services*
  1 part-time
  - Oversees administration and financial aspects.

"EFNEO has provided more services for Reed than any other organization with which he has been involved. He has made the most progress with EFNEO... I am completely satisfied."

Reed's Mother

Family Involvement: National studies have clearly shown that persons with epilepsy who have chronically lost jobs in the past, or those who demonstrate difficulty with the vocational service process, can be helped significantly in experiencing occupational success through the support of the family. The Employment Program encourages family members to become involved in the development of a client's individual treatment plan and in case conferences. For clients who do not have family contacts, both formal and informal support group formats are provided and facilitated.

Reed's Story

Since the age of six months, 25 year old Reed has been diagnosed with epilepsy. Although he takes two types of medication, he still experiences monthly grand mal (tonic clonic) seizures and daily petit mal (absence) seizures. Reed proudly graduated from high school, despite both learning and social adjustment difficulties. He continues to live with his parents and for four years prior to his entry into programming at the EFNEO, expressed an interest in working in a restaurant setting.

Reed was referred to EFNEO's Employment program by his counselor at the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission - Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR). This individual had entered Reed into two other rehabilitation programs within Cleveland facilities over a two-year period. However, little progress was seen in Reed's work capability of interpersonal skills. Before recommending a sheltered workshop placement to the family, the BVR counselor decided to engage Reed in services with EFNEO, As a result, an Individual Assistance Plan, outlining the interventions to be rendered, was developed by Reed, his family, the BVR counselor, a County MRDD Case Manager, and an EFNEO Social Worker and Employment Staff member.

Reed was first placed in EFNEO's Community-based Work Adjustment component at a Senior Citizen Center. Here, with the guidance of EFNEO staff, he learned general duties such as weeding, grounds maintenance, and watering plants. He was also provided with daily living and socialization skills. After two months, staff helped Reed secure a competitive job at a Kenny King's restaurant outlet. With the support of a job coach and the employer, Reed has learned to perform more specific, production-oriented duties with more success than he has ever experienced.

The future still holds many challenges for Reed. The aforementioned interdisciplinary team has formulated plans to increase his job hours with continued job coaching, and to help him become more involved in EFNEO's Social/Recreational Adjustment component. For now, his mother says that "EFNEO has provided more services for Reed than any other organization with which he has been involved. He has made the most progress with EFNEO...I am completely satisfied".

Community Employment Services of Wood Lane
Wood County Board of Mental Retardation/ Developmental Disabilities
541 Pearl Street
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402
(419) 352-5059

Wood Lane
Community Employment Services

Mission

Community Employment Services of Wood Lane's mission is to provide avenues for persons with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities to experience job opportunities that enhance their social, emotional and vocational needs; thereby enabling each individual to develop to their fullest potential as productive, independent members of society.

Services

The following services are provided by the Wood County Board of Mental Retardation/ Developmental Disabilities through their Community Employment Services Program: (1) career development group, (2) occupational work sampling, (3) work evaluation, (4) short term transition sites, (5) mobile work crew, (6) work enclaves, (7) job development, (8) job training, (9) related work skills training, (10) habilitation services, (11) case management, (12) psychological services, (13) follow along services, and (14) employee support options.

Organizational Context

The Wood County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD) is a public training and rehabilitation facility which exists primarily to offer comprehensive life-spanning services to individuals with moderate, severe, and profound mental retardation, and other developmental disabilities, as well as to provide supportive services to those individuals' families. These services are dedicated to the development of individual skills in educational, social, emotional, physical and employment areas, allowing each individual to live in and participate to the fullest extent in their community.

In 1985, the Wood County Board of MR/DD began its Community Employment Services Program of Wood Lane (CES) to offer adults with mental retardation/developmental disabilities an alternative to sheltered workshops. The program is funded by support from a variety of federal, state, and local sources including: (1) Chapter 1 - student transition training, (2) Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, (3) Private Industry Council, and (4) other grant-in-aid funding. With a concentration on options outside of sheltered employment, the program has successfully placed over 110 individuals with disabilities in over 170 employment and training sites around Wood County.

Contact Person

Teresa Fulk
Community Employment Services Supervisor
(419) 352-5059

Melinda Slusser
Adult Services Director
(419) 352-5115

Population Served

Community Employment Services of Wood Lane serves youth and adults with developmental disabilities.

Exemplary Components

- Collaboration
- Inclusion With Non-disabled Workers
- Comprehensive Planning Process

Program Staff

- *Community Employment Services Supervisor*
  1-full-time
  - Supervises staff, grants & operation of program.

- *Trainer Supervisor*
  1-full-time
  - Supervises trainers.
  - Sets schedules, time sheets.
  - Assists CES Supervisor.

- *Job Developers*
  2-full-time
  - Develop employment.

- *Habilitation Specialists II/ Follow Along*
  2-full-time
  - Provide follow along services.
  - Secure supports for jobs.
  - Complete paperwork for employment.

- *Job Trainers*
  5-20 part-time
  5 full-time
  - Provide job coaching activities.

Program Description

Upon referral to CES, a meeting is held with the consumer, care providers, and advocate to provide as much information as possible about the individual's strengths, abilities, and vocational preferences. Further assessment is completed through the Occupational Work Sampling program in which the individual is given the chance to work for one month in a variety of work settings. These experiences help both the consumer and the team to understand more about the individual's work preferences and abilities.

CES also coordinates a variety of transitional employment sites, providing persons who are interested with an opportunity to experience temporary job assignments in the community. The goal of the Occupational Work Sampling, as with the Transition program, is to help individuals identify their vocational preferences through actual work experience.

As the individual begins to understand more about the world of work, CES further assists him/her with career planning though Career Development Groups. Through these activities, job sites are targeted based on the individual's job skills and interests, as well as factors such as location, schedule, and overall atmosphere within a particular work place. Once a job is located, individualized job coaching occurs. When the consumer is independent from the job coach and working with natural supports, ongoing follow along services are put into place. CES continue its services until the consumer requests that they end.

Exemplary Components

Community Employment Services of Wood County Board of MR/DD is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Collaboration: CES has developed adult clusters to ensure that individual needs are met without overlapping services from different agencies. CES works with the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, Private Industry Council, Department of Human Services and Social Securities Administration. Cooperative agreements have been written with Rehabilitation Services Commission and Private Industry Council to utilize funding for job coaching services.

Inclusion With Non-disabled Workers: Out of more than 90 persons that are currently working through CES, approximately 65 are individual placements. This means that the individual is hired directly by the employer and works side by side with others who do not have disabilities. This allows persons with disabilities to rely upon the natural supports of the work environment.

Comprehensive Planning Process: The planning process used by CES includes the coordination of support that address all life areas of the consumer. The focus is a on addressing vocational, educational, residential, personal, and leisure goals and interests in conjunction with one another.

Terri's Story

When Terri was 17 years old she was referred to a county in Northwestern Ohio because appropriate services were not available at that time in her county of residence. Various educational and residential options had been tried, but none seemed to meet her particular needs. Initial meetings involved representatives from both school districts, County Boards of MR/DD, and case management offices, as well as Terri, her mother/guardian, a Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) counselor, and residential staff from the foster home at which she resided.

Information available on Terri included: (1) no previous vocational experiences; (2) limited verbal communication skills; (3) autistic-like behaviors (disturbed by changes in routine and persons with whom she interacted.) Additionally, Terri had clearly indicated that she did not like being in school. Therefore, the team recommended that Community Employment Services (CES) be utilized to provide her with a job exposure opportunity.

Terri's first vocational placement required her to work only one and a half hours per day in a setting where there was little interaction with others. She was driven to the job site daily by two staff from her foster home. With the help of the foster home staff, as well a job coach provided by CES and funded through RSC, Terri learned her work routine. Terri remained at this job for six weeks before moving on to another work experience.

The plan for Terri was to slowly expand her repertoire of work skills and appropriate behaviors by demanding slightly more of her at each site. Implementation of this plan resulted in positive changes in Terri's behavior during her second job assignment. She began coming to work accompanied by just one staff from home, and eventually learned to perform her duties with only the job coach for support.

Terri proved herself to be a competent worker, interested in doing a good job and accepting responsibility for her work. Part of her training on the job involved learning to use an electronic communication device with her coach/ supervisor. In addition, Terri learned to ride the local school bus independently to work. Changes also began to take place in Terri's behavior at home. She became increasingly independent in getting ready for work, and often talked about selecting and buying the clothes that she wore.

Over the next 13 months, Terri progressed through three more transitional work experiences, each one demanding that she she accept more responsibility for her tasks as well as her behavior. She continued to make great strides both at work and at home. Work became the focal point of her day. She learned to pack her lunch, use the public transportation system, and even to adjust her routine at home to meet fluctuations in her work schedule! Terri has recently celebrated her first anniversary working as a sorter for a local mail service.

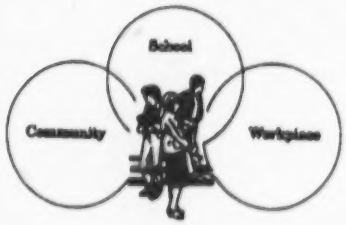
The number of persons and variety of services that continue to pull together to help ensure Terri's success is sometimes overwhelming. However, that kind of cooperation between schools, County Board of MR/DD, case management, and local community-base service providers is what was necessary to show Terri just what she was capable of accomplishing. With her 21st birthday fast approaching, it is hoped that such continued collaboration will provide Terri with the support necessary for her to maintain employment and move into a more independent living arrangement.

The number of persons and variety of services that continue to pull together to help ensure Terri's success is sometimes overwhelming.

Program Profiles:

Parent-Professional Collaboration

Instructional Programs for Employment
Cooperative Educational Service Agency - CESA #1
2930 South Root River Parkway
West Allis, WI 53227
(414) 546-3000



Mission

The mission of the Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA #1), Instructional Programs for Employment is to assist students to develop more fully the academic and occupational skills necessary to be successful within the school, family, community and workplace.

Services

The following services are provided by Instructional Programs for Employment: (1) career assessment, (2) individualized vocational profiles, (3) instructional materials and inservices for teachers, (4) interagency coordination, (5) development of volunteer and competitive jobs, and (6) follow-up.

Organizational Context

The Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA #1) is a statutory agency created to facilitate collaboration among local school districts, counties and the state.

CESA #1 began its "Community Employability Project" (CEMP) in 1986 through a state discretionary grant written by Special Education Directors who wanted more diverse employment options for their students. During its first year, the program worked with a two schools and a total of 20 students with disabilities. Since that time, CEMP has restructured and combined its programs into what is now called "Instructional Programs for Employment". Within that structure, CEMP staff provide services to students with disabilities in 11 area schools. An estimated 125 students will receive individualized employment and transition services from Instructional Programs for Employment during the 1992-93 year.

Program Description

A student entering Instructional Programs for Employment in high school would have ideally been involved in CESA #1's middle school program "Prepare for Success". This program exposes students to careers and the world of work. As a student makes the transition to high school, he/she is assessed

Contact Person

Eileen Dagen, Director
(414) 546-3000

Population Served

CESA #1, Instructional Programs for Employment serves students with mild/moderate disabilities.

Exemplary Features

- Parent/Professional Collaboration
- Interagency Collaboration

Program Staff

- *Director*
  1 full-time
  - Supervises staff.
  - Coordinates the project.

- *Transition Specialists*
  3 full-time
  - Act as liaison with other agencies.
  - Perform student evaluations and assessments.
  - Conduct workshops for families.
  - Develop jobs.
  - Provide job and skills training.

- *Vocational Specialist*
  1 full-time
  - Assists students & teachers with vocational goals.
  - Assists teachers in making instructional methods more relevant to the competitive marketplace.

and given opportunities to explore careers of interests and develop job related skills through classroom activities, field trips, speakers, job shadowing and through involvement in in-school jobs.

Eventually students move into a training situation in the community or an after school job with limited hours. When necessary, transition specialists assist students in finding employment. All students are closely supervised and may work with one of the transition specialists or a job coach. At the end of their junior year students are encouraged to begin thinking about planning for exiting high school. Linkages are made with appropriate agencies before students exit school to ensure that students and their families are familiar with the process to access these services if needed. Students who leave school without employment are linked with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) who assists them as they continue to pursue employment options.

Instructional Programs for Employment continues to follow-up through the summer and during the first year after students exit school. They also work closely with DVR during this time, and cooperate with any other adult service agency necessary to assist the student.

Exemplary Components

Instructional Programs for Employment is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Parent/Professional Collaboration: Parents are involved in each step of the program's process. Workshops and in-services focus on areas identified through parent surveys, providing information on topics such as advocacy and assessment. These workshops and trainings assist parents to be better informed and more effective advocates for their children. Parents are represented on the program's board, and their input is considered first when making decisions on programmatic change. In addition, staff follow-up with parents after their children have graduated.

Interagency Collaboration: Through activities that foster interagency committees, linkages and relationships, the program serves as a conduit to bring groups together. It has its own interagency transition council, and is involved in helping participati..g local school districts set them up as well. Program staff provide direct training to parents and staff from other agencies. In addition, the program addresses needs and develops solutions based on the findings of needs assessments from the participating districts.

Bill's Story

Bill was referred to the Instructional Programs for Employment by his classroom teacher during his first year of high school. At that time, Bill was very unsure of his potential. He was performing at a 5th grade level, and lacked any employment related skills. The outlook for Bill was grim.

During his first year with Instructional Programs for Employment, Bill grudgingly participated in a number of services including (1) career/vocational assessment, (2) career exploration, and (3) direct instruction in pre-employment skills. He wasn't particularly motivated to participate in these services or in attaining part-time employment in the community.

During the second year, Bill was assigned a male transition specialist at his school. This change in staff resulted in many positive changes for Bill. He became a much more willing participant in the employment process, accepting a job in the school library. And, although he still wasn't ready to work in the community, Bill expressed an interest in a future career as a chef or an artist. He also became actively involved in Instructional Programs for Employment's classroom activities and career program.

At the end of his sophomore year, Bill began to work part-time at a local nursing home. He worked in the kitchen, receiving support from the nursing home staff and his transition specialist. After about 6 months, he decided that he did not like the hours, and wanted to work someplace else. The transition specialist set up an interview for Bill at a large pizza restaurant that had previously employed students in the program. Bill followed through and got a job doing bus work. Bill remained on this job for one year. By this time, Bill was developing a positive self-esteem. He began to engage himself in self discovery through which his talents as an artist began to emerge.

In his senior year, he decided that he wanted to work in the dietary kitchen of a nursing again. With the support of Instructional Programs for Employment staff, Bill found a job, applied and interviewed all on his own. He was also linked up with his local Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) office at this time. With DVR's assistance, Bill planned to attend the local technical school and take classes related to his interest in art. Circumstances, however, did not allow Bill to obtain his goal at that time.

Currently Bill is working for a large printing company. As a printing assistant, he is developing valuable work skills and experience, while expanding his interest in art at the same time. Bill's mother has continued her work as an Instructional Programs for Employment Advisory Board member - supporting and assisting the project by sharing her expertise as a parent and employer. Bill, his family, the community, and Instructional Programs for Employment staff have all benefited from the truly collaborative effort that has made Bill's story a success.

Bill, his family, the community, and Instructional Programs for Employment staff have all benefited from the truly collaborative effort that has made Bill's story a success.

BUILDING Project
Family Resource Center on Disabilities
20 East Jackson Blvd., Room 900
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 939-3513

Contact Person

Kathryn Moery
Project Coordinator
(312) 939-3513

Population Served

The BUILDING Project serves youth with disabilities (ages 14-22) and their families.

Exemplary Components

- Community Centered
- Mentorship
- Network Building

Mission

The mission of the BUILDING Project is to enhance the quality of life for youth with disabilities by promoting independence through broadening their participation in community living.

Services

The following services are provided by the BUILDING Project. They include: (1) individualized assistance for family transition planning, (2) workshops and individualized assistance to promote empowerment, (3) information, referral and linkage, (4) support groups, (5) training and education, and (6) follow-along.

Organizational Context

The Family Resource Center on Disabilities (formerly the Coordinating Council for Handicapped Children) has provided information, training, advocacy and support services to individuals with disabilities in the state of Illinois for more than 23 years.

Since 1989, the Family Resource Center on Disabilities has operated the BUILDING Project through funding from the Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Service. Designed to provide individualized family transition planning services to residents of the city of Chicago, the BUILDING Project is a family networking program targeted toward low-income, minority families. All Project activities are coordinated with public and private service providers, especially local education agencies and the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Program Description

All families participating in the BUILDING Project undergo an intensive, in-take meeting with staff to assess their individual needs and to develop strategies to meet them. At this meeting, the youth is encouraged to share a personal vision of the future from which transition planning can occur. The families continue to meet with staff every 4-6 weeks to develop a transition plan which outlines activities to ensure successful post-secondary outcomes in nine domains. These domains include, (1) income support, (2) employment,

(3) training/education, (4) living arrangements, (5) recreation/leisure, (6) transportation, (7) medical, (8) insurance, and (9) self-advocacy. Family meetings are scheduled at times and in locations that are convenient and accessible to the family.

Families are encouraged to attend support groups and workshops to establish formal/informal networks and to develop advocacy and empowerment skills. Staff provide families with information, referral and linkage to public and private service providers to further remove barriers and foster a smooth transition from school to work.

Students exit the BUILDING Project upon completion from their high school special education program. Follow-up meetings with families are scheduled for approximately 6 months after the student graduates to assess needs and achievement of their transition outcomes. Families continue to participate in support groups and workshops, with individual assistance available as needed.

Exemplary Components

The BUILDING Project is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities and their families in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Community Centered: Staff live in Chicago communities similar to those of the families being served. They are people with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. This dramatically increases the accessibility and comfortability of the services and interactions between staff and the families being served. All individualized services can be delivered in the family's community, if preferred.

Mentorship: The project utilizes parents and adults with disabilities as mentors to the youth and their family members. One parent and one person with a disability work as a team with each family. Many mentors are former project participants who volunteer their time after they no longer receive services themselves. This approach promotes tremendous parent/professional collaboration and understanding among participants.

Network Building: All project participants receive a copy of the BUILDING Project Resource Directory which provides information about families that indicate a desire to network with other families in the project. Families are encouraged to invite extended family members, friends and neighbors who have an interest in the youth to participate in transition planning meetings. Through the intake process, staff collects information about individuals and organizations that have supported or provided services to youth in the past, to facilitate the development of support network. Formation of geographic support groups is also supported by the BUILDING Project.

Program Staff

- *Executive Director*
  1 part-time
  - Oversees project operation.
- *Project Coordinator*
  1 part-time
  - Supervises staff.
  - Recruits families.
  - Evaluates program.
- *Family Resource Workers*
  6 part-time
  - Provide individualized assistance for transition planning.
  - Plan and facilitate support groups and workshops.
- *Secretary*
  1 part-time
  - Performs clerical duties.
- *Bookkeeper*
  1 part-time
  - Maintains payroll.

Sonia's Story

Sonia and her mother's apprehension melted when the Special Needs Coordinator respectfully considered their input at the meeting.

Sonia first met the staff of the BUILDING Project at a Career Fair sponsored by her high school's Special Education Department. She was a seventeen year old sophomore who had been identified as Educably Mentally Handicapped (EMH). Because Sonia's mother did not speak English, a Spanish speaking Family Resource Worker named Amelia, and her partner, Randall, an individual with quadriplegia, were assigned to work with their family. Upon her initial meeting, Amelia described Sonia as very shy, poorly groomed, wearing frumpy clothes and not progressing academically.

Over the next 18 months, Amelia and Randall met monthly with Sonia, and many members of her extended family, in the family's home, to identify realistic goals for her future and to develop transition plans to help her meet these goals. Soon Sonia determined that she was interested in clerical work after high school. To support this goal, vocational classes would need to be in included in Sonia's IEP. Since Sonia had no vocational classes scheduled, Amelia and Randall helped Sonia's mother to dictate a letter in Spanish requesting a meeting to add appropriate vocational classes to the IEP. With Amelia's help, the letter was translated into English and Sonia copied it on paper to be delivered to the Case Manager. Both Sonia and her mother feared the Case Manager because of her disrespectful manner, and expressed apprehension about having to work through her to accomplish these pivotal steps in Sonia's futures planning. By provided information about Special Education Rights, as well as through role playing, Amelia and Randall prepared the family to actively participate in this IEP meeting where Sonia's transition needs were to be discussed. Sonia and her mother's apprehension melted when the Special Needs Coordinator respectfully considered their input at the meeting, and developed a class scheduled that would include appropriate vocational classes in Sonia's junior year.

In her senior year, Sonia expressed the desire to be placed in a job in the community that would help her develop better clerical skills. She independently enlisted the help of the school's job developer to explore community-based job opportunities.

Today, Sonia is a stylishly dressed, well-groomed 19 year old. She works at a local hospital, 3 days per week after school, in a paid position as a typist. Whereas her father was required to provide her with transportation in the past, Sonia now travels independently to and from her job on public transportation, and requires no additional supports on the job. She is also maintaining good grades in school.

At a recent BUILDING Project support group meeting, in front of the large group assembled, Sonia described her new life and expressed gratitude for her Family Resource workers, Amelia and Randall, who helped her make these changes.

"Parents are Experts" Parents Training Parents

United Cerebral Palsy Association of Metropolitan Detroit, Inc.
23077 Greenfield, Suite 205
Southfield, Michigan 48075-3745
(313) 557-5070

Mission

Parents are Experts, Parent Training Parents reflects United Cerebral Palsy of Metropolitan Detroit's (UCP) mission to positively affect the quality of life for persons with cerebral palsy and others with severe disabilities and/or multiple service needs, and their families.

Services

The following services are provided by Parents are Experts: (1) basic and advanced parent advocacy training, (2) information and referral, (3) topical workshops, and (4) support groups.

Organizational Context

United Cerebral Palsy Association of Metropolitan Detroit, Inc. (UCP) is a non-profit parent and consumer advocacy organization serving persons with cerebral palsy and other disabilities in Wayne County, Michigan. Through a variety of UCP programs and services that focus on self-empowerment and independence, choice and control of services has become a reality to many persons with disabilities living in Wayne county. UCP also advocates for personal assistance services and other community supports to allow people with disabilities to live as independently as possible.

Helping children with disabilities has been a major thrust of UCP since its inception in 1949. The creation of new special education laws in the mid 70's prompted UCP to conduct a needs assessment of parents of children with disabilities. The assessment gave strong documentation to the unmet needs of these parents for information and resources on special education law and how to become more effective partners in their child's educational program. As a result, The "Parents are Experts" Parent Training Parent (PTP) program was established in 1983 through a grant from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS). PTP provides skill training and information to assist parents/family members to better understand and effectively deal with the educational system and other resources critical in their children's lives. The program provides direct training and services to over 1,400 parents per year, as well as providing information and outreach services to countless parents, schools and agencies in Wayne County.

Contact Person

Barbara Cardinal
Director, *Parents Are Experts*
(313) 557-5070

Population Served

Parents are Experts, Parents Training Parents program serves parents and guardians of children with disabilities, as well as professionals who service these families.

Exemplary Components

- Interagency Collaboration
- Multi-racial & Ethnic Participation
- Parent to Parent Communication

Program Staff

- *Project Administrator*
  1 full-time
  - Provides overall executive direction on fiscal management, and employment decisions.

- *Project & Advocacy Directors*
  2 full-time
  - Provide overall management and supervision.
  - Monitor statistics and progress toward meeting objectives.

- *Project Coordinator*
  1 full-time
  - Coordinates and implements project activities.
  - Supervises staff, parent trainers and volunteers.
  - Develops and adapts curriculum and materials.
  - Coordinates newsletter.
  - Performs outreach activities.

- *Staff Parent Trainers*
  3 full-time
  - Train parents and professionals.
  - Assist with curriculum and materials development.
  - Perform outreach activities.
  - Assist with newsletter.

- *Clerical Support*
  1 full-time
  - Provides clerical support to staff.
  - Maintains project files.

Program Description

"Parents are Experts", Parents Training Parents is based on the premise that parents are experts when it comes to their children. All members of the PTP staff are parents of children with disabilities, facilitating greater understanding and trust between participants.

PTP offers a variety of trainings for parents and professionals. The purpose of these trainings is to provide basic information on the federal and state special education laws by teaching: (1) how to prepare more effectively for the Individual Education Planning committee meeting; (2) to communicate more effectively with special educators and other relevant service professionals; and (3) how to become more effective advocates for the needs of their families.

The program serves Wayne County, Michigan's largest county comprised of a diverse, multi-cultural, and underserved/under-represented population. PTP reaches out to this population in their own communities in order to prepare parents to be partners with the school and/or agencies that provide services to their children. Services provided by PTP, as well as all other UCP programs, are available to all consumers who need them.

Exemplary Components

"Parents are Experts", Parents Training Parents is exemplary in its provision of services to individuals with disabilities and their families in a variety of ways. The following are a few areas that are especially noteworthy.

Interagency Collaboration: PTP has strong collaborative relationships with Detroit Public Schools, Wayne County Intermediate School District, Local ARCs, Protection and Advocacy, Latino Outreach and other agencies in Wayne county. This commitment to interagency collaboration has enabled them to provide direct services, as well as information, and outreach services to over 9,000 persons in 1992 alone. This ensures that consumers and their families and friends in Wayne county know where services are available and how to easily access them.

Multi-racial and Ethnic Participation: The program has strong participation from traditionally underserved and under-represented populations including multi-racial and ethnic groups, non-english speaking parents, and parents who themselves have disabilities. All trainings are done in native languages, and take place in barrier free, unintimidating locations that are as close to the homes/communities of participants as possible which is seen as absolutely crucial for participation of some traditionally underserved families in Wayne County.

Parent to Parent Communication: PTP provides advanced training to 40-60 parents per year to be Parent Trainers who will provide support and serve as a resource to other parents. These parent trainers realize first hand that no one is more concerned and better able to advocate for the educational well being of children than an informed parent. PTP training has empowered parents to successfully advocate for their children's rights in proactive and productive ways. This positively affects several school districts as they update and change their approach to inclusion.

Alex's Story

Alex is our youngest son. Four years ago our family began an incredible adventure. If anyone would have told us at the time what a wild roller coaster ride our lives would become, we never would have believed it.

Alex was a beautiful baby. He did all the things babies do. When Alex was two, however, we noticed he didn't talk like other children and had behaviors that were problematic. We contacted the local school who performed an evaluation and labeled Alex "severely speech and language impaired". At three, Alex began to attend the Pre-Primary Impaired Program two mornings a week. We wanted Alex to attend every morning, but the school told us he was "two young".

It was hard trying to get information from the school. The professionals often gave us short and curt answers - leaving us feeling empty. They were the experts, so why did we feel like Alex was not receiving the help he needed? Every Individual Education Planning (IEP) meeting was an experience in negativity, the emphasis on Alex's weaknesses and not his strengths. We were made to feel that it was our fault Alex had neurological problems.

The last straw was when the professionals advised us to send Alex to a center based program for autistic children where he was to be segregated from his peers. This made us angry. This was not what we wanted for Alex. Somehow we were connected to "Parents are Experts", Parents Training Parents project at the United Cerebral Palsy Association. I called and was connected to Martha Wilson, a parent trainer. Martha advised me to attend a training on Special Education Law and the IEP process. It was wonderful to hear the stories of women who had aready gone through what I was going through. I knew I was not alone. I met Jessie Mullins, an advocate who helped me to get information to our school board on inclusion and the IEP process. Through UCP, I learned the law and more importantly, received the support I desperately needed.

Martha helped me to get connected with one of the advocates at UCP. They helped me set up a comprehensive plan for Alex. Suddenly the cloud started to lift from around our family.

The "Parents are Experts" Project helped learn how to collaborate with the professionals, and how to use the IEP to get what we needed for our son. Alex began making progress and the school professionals began to be more positive in their approach to him. Everyday we see Alex making progress. Alex is now included in a regular kindergarten class with his own aide. The children have accepted him, and the teacher and aide have helped to make his experience in the classroom successful. Our relationships with the professionals have also improved dramatically.

All of this has occurred because we have met dedicated people who have been willing to help us every step of the way . The root to this beautiful tree came from Parents Are Experts at United Cerebral Palsy.

"It was wonderful to hear the stories of women who had aready gone through what I was going through. I knew I was not alone."

Alex's Mother

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